

## Wet Celery

J. Archer Avary

we eat lunch  
    in sunshine  
our dietary needs have diverged, yet we are here together  
masticating these vegetables while we indulge in  
    marital banter

my problem is too much fat  
it has congregated around my face and belly  
I look like an obese chipmunk, I say  
and like a good wife  
    she disagrees

she has sworn off carbohydrates  
she pushes slabs of avocado around her plate with a fork  
she dreams of creamy potato soup with crusty buttered bread  
she absent-mindedly rips the stems from spinach leaves  
    because she hates the taste

she can't understand how I put up with celery  
"all those strings," she says, "don't they get stuck in your teeth?"  
    but that never bothered me:  
my mom used to put peanut butter on celery sticks with raisins  
she called this delicacy "ants on a log"  
    a childhood favourite

this is the same woman who instilled in me an intrinsic fear  
    of unwashed produce  
bogeymen like e. coli and salmonella and trichinosis  
to this day I wash my vegetables  
    with religious fervour

I have no beef with celery, but explain me this:  
    how peanut butter adheres securely  
        to literally everything  
especially the roofs of mouths  
but refuses to stick to  
    wet celery?

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